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Dhaka, May 2 (IANS) The Bangladesh government has welcomed a US Congressional panel's move to drop it from a list of countries deemed to violate the religious freedom of minorities. The decision is a vindication of the Sheikh Hasina-led new government's determination to protect minorities, a spokesman for the prime minister's office said here Friday.

The **US Commission on International Religious Freedom** report said Bangladesh's elections in December were "relatively free of violence".

It said that the victorious party in Bangladesh's Dec 28, 2008 elections, the Awami League, was "more favourably disposed towards minority rights protection".